THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Immediately after the fire broke out men and material of the Regional Crisis Management Team (RCMT) of ONGC were mobilised on the site to combat the fire. Simultaneously, the services of three experts from M/s. Wild Well Control Inc., USA were obtained to assist ONGC team in the well control and capping operations.

ONGC's Crisis Mangement Team possesses both indegenous and imported equipment for blow out control.

(c) The rig and equipment belonging to M/S Hitech Drilling Co., have been damaged. The losses incurred by ONGC as a result of the blow out are provisionally estimated to be around Rs. 7.02 crores.

In the last 3 years, there were 3 incidents of fire in the wells of ONGC, viz, Pasarlapudi and Mandapeta in Andhra Pradesh and Well No. BRDE in Assam. One well of Oil India Ltd., also caught fire in Kathaloni, Assam during this period.

(d) Before commencing drilling operations, the drill site is fenced with barbed wires and security personnel are deployed to guard the site round the clock, and to check the movement of vehicles, men and materials.

Oil Exploration Work in the Country

2770. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the places where oil exploration work is going on in the country at present;

(b) the sediment cover area, with estimated gas/oil reserves in the country; and

(c) what percentage of this has been exploited so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Exploration of oil and gas is being conducted in Cambay, Rajasthan, Krishna-Godavari, Cauvery, Bengal, Assam-Arakan Fold Belt, Upper Assam, Himalayan Foreland, Ganga Valley and Vindhyan/Satpure basins in the onland and in the Eastern and Western offshore areas.

(b) The total sedimentary area of the country is 1.785 Sq.K.Ms. upto 200 mts. isobath. The initial inplace reserves as on 1.4.96 amount to 6839.21 MMT of Oil and Oil equivalent of gas of which recoverable reserves amount to 2268.64 MMT.

(c) A total of 801.07 MMT of reserves of oil and gas have been exploited till 31.3.1996. This accounts for 35.3% of the total recoverable reserves.

LPG on Demand by 2000 AD

2771. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the 1st March 1997 captioned "LPG on demand by 2000 in Delhi, IOC";

(b) whether this plan would be extended all over the country by 2000 AD;

(c) if not, the constraints in this regard;

(d) whether Government have any plans to increase the capacity of existing IOC plants; and

(e) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (e) Release of new connections for clearing of waiting list depends inter-alia upon product availability, slack available with the existing distributors, minimum/ sustainable allocation to newly